

**Architecture for Implementing the Common Core Standards:
Strategies, Partnerships & Progress
12:15 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2012
Marriott Louisville Downtown Hotel
Gov. Steve Beshear
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Welcome to Kentucky.

This is a beautiful state with a lot to see and do. When you're finished with your work here, I encourage you to get out and enjoy yourselves.

When Kentucky became the first state in the nation to adopt the Common Core Standards two years ago this month, it was a historical moment for us.

It was also a defining step in our ongoing effort – a decades-long effort – to build a world-class education system.

With the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act in 1990, Kentucky created from scratch a new system of education that demonstrated – to the nation and to our children – our commitment to a better future.

But the world has not stood still.

In the two decades since, technology has grown even more sophisticated ... the pace of learning has quickened dramatically ... and the fundamental foundation of knowledge and skills that one requires to function – and succeed – has expanded far beyond what we could envision as recently as two decades ago.

We knew our work wasn't done.

We knew Kentucky needed to continue to improve.

And we knew it would take all of us working together to fulfill our promise to Kentucky's children.

Three separate boards – the Education Professional Standards Board, the Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education, each of which addresses a separate stage of Kentucky's education process -- came together in their first-ever joint session and unanimously approved the deeper, clearer and more rigorous academic standards.

By doing so, they helped Kentucky step up and engage in a collaborative model to move us closer toward positioning our children for success in both the workforce and higher education.

A unified plan and set of strategies engaged our districts, school leaders, teachers, colleges of education, administrators, faculty from across the campuses – as well as state education leaders.

As many of you know, you do not find this kind of communication in many states.

Rarer still is the kind of collaboration that led us to the adoption of the standards, and now to the successful implementation of those standards.

At the same time, Senate Bill 1 passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2009 brought a new focus on what students actually learn, and aligned that learning to what colleges and employers expect high school graduates to know in order to be successful.

As a result, the definition of a successful student is no longer limited to receiving a high school diploma.

A successful student is one who has the knowledge, skills and abilities to be ready for whatever comes next, whether that is a job that can provide a living wage or some form of postsecondary education.

We gather this week -- a result of continued and focused collaboration -- to share Kentucky's Common Core Standards implementation strategies and progress with you, and to learn from each of you.

We see this event as a springboard for energized dialogue and engaged partnerships. We must learn from each other and support the work because the stakes are high.

Since adopting the Common Core Standards, Kentucky has done some remarkable things:

- New policies provide high school students who successfully complete new transitional courses or other intervention programs guaranteed placement into credit-bearing courses in college.
- Programs like Advance Kentucky provide greater access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and specific professional development for teachers who continue to show fantastic results.
- A new, comprehensive advising tool kit for all middle and high school teachers focuses on the skills and attitudes needed to enter college or the 21st century workplace prepared.

- Assessment academies work with districts within their regions to determine teacher professional development needs.
- Better-defined learning outcomes for developmental, transitional and supplemental courses align with entry into college credit-bearing coursework.
- Free online placement exams for students completing transitional courses and standard college readiness scores have been adopted by all public universities.
- A new statewide teacher evaluation system will include all aspects of teacher performance, particularly growth in student achievement.
- And new masters programs for in-service teachers, and revised preparation programs for teachers and school leaders increase entry standards, require all teacher candidates to pass rigorous basic skills tests and include high-quality clinical experiences.

Your participation at this conference demonstrates the commitment of leadership in your state and your organization.

Today is about stepping up, together, in a collaborative way.

When all of these lessons come together and individuals become teams with the singular focus of success for students, remarkable things can happen.

They are happening here, and they can happen in your state.

I congratulate all of you and look forward to continued success.

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